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IDHS Provides Winter Weather Tips

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Department of Homeland Security is issuing the following information in preparation for expected severe weather.

Hazardous driving conditions due to snow and ice on highways and bridges lead to many traffic accidents, which is a leading cause of death during winter storms. Another primary cause of death is exposure.

Winter-Related Health Risks

- People, pets, and livestock are susceptible to frostbite and hypothermia during winter storms.
- Those at risk are primarily either engaged in outdoor activity (shoveling snow, digging out vehicles, or assisting stranded motorists), or are the elderly or very young.
- Citizens' use of generators, kerosene heaters and alternative forms of heating may create other hazards such as fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Remove wet clothing. Working up a sweat trying to dislodge a vehicle can cause hypothermia if you do not change into dry clothing.

Prepare a winter emergency kit for your vehicle. Supplies should include:

- At least two blankets or a sleeping bag
- Flashlight or battery-powered lantern and extra batteries
- Booster (jumper) cables
- Emergency flares
- Extra clothing, particularly boots, hats and mittens
- A steel shovel and rope to use as a lifeline
- Bottled water or juice and nonperishable high-energy foods (granola bars, raisins, nuts, peanut butter or cheese crackers)
- Thermos or container that won't allow liquids to freeze
- First-aid kit and necessary medications
- Sand or non-clumping cat litter for tire traction, if your vehicle gets stuck in snow or ice
- A cell phone and charger which can be adapted to vehicle use.
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Candle, matches, heat sticks/packs, lighters, hand-warmers, etc. (Be sure to crack the window if using a heat source indoors)
- Small tent or shelter half

Winter Driving Tips:

- If you can avoid driving or take public transportation, please do so.

- Pay attention to weather reports on the radio. Allow time in your schedule for bad weather and/or traffic delays.
- Keep spare window washer fluid in the trunk and make sure the wiper blades are in good working condition
- Become familiar with your vehicle's winter weather operating characteristics. Front-wheel-drive vehicles generally handle better than rear-wheel vehicles on slippery roads because the weight of the engine is on the drive wheels, improving traction.
- Keep your windows clear of snow and ice. Remember to clean head, tail and brake lights.
- If you need to turn on your wipers, you need to turn on your headlights.
- Bridges become slick and icy before roads. Bridge temperatures can be five to six degrees colder than roadways, so drive with extreme caution during freezing temperatures.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full. Fill the tank before you park for lengthy periods. This will help prevent fuel line freeze-up.

For more information, go to www.in.gov/dhs.

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